

# THE HISTORY OF LANDFALL

## INTRODUCTION

Today the continent of Landfall is commonly referred to as the Empire of Vorkathia, but this was not always so. Before the Nameless Revolt, and the appearance of Vorkath, the continent of Landfall was made up of three distinct countries: Aurelia to the west, Fronteria to the East and Öchland to the north.

## THE DATE SYSTEM

Dates in Landfall are recorded around the epoch of the arrival of the god Vorkath. The years preceding are labelled BV (Before Vorkath), the years after are labelled EV (Era Of Vorkath). Below outlines key events in the The last 350 years of Landfall, from 50BV to 300EV (the present day).

## A BRIEF SUMMARY

The continent of Landfall is currently one political structure known as Greater Vorkathia. To understand the present day political and religious landscape it is important to understand the recent past.

Historically the continent was split into 3 countries: Aurelia to the west, Fronteria to the South East and Öchland to the North West. These areas still exist as states within Greater Vorkathia with separate political structures, cultures and histories.

Aurelia has always been the largest, richest and most powerful of the nations, with established trade networks all across the known world. It was controlled by the Ziani Dynasty. Frontera was the Cultural heart of the continent, with the most creative and progressive thinkers, while Öchland was the least advanced and home to many quarrelling barbarian tribes.

During a period known as 'The Nameless Revolt, a fire Giant named Sief (the champion of the evil The Nameless God) led a conquering army across the continent. Fronteria and Öchland fell quickly. Aurellia would have been next had it not been for a band of freedom fighters, now known as 'The Heralds of Vorkath' who pursued Sief to her underground fortress to confront her. Before her demise Sief captured and tortured two of the Heralds. Their cries of anguish were heard by the god Vorkath and they became the first disciples of Vorkath in the known world: Teflon the Everliving, and Gideon the Godslayer.

Sief was destroyed and the Great Victory was declared but the The Nameless Revolt had left the land scarred.

Illidorn, High-Mage and one of the heroes of the Great Victory, led a campaign to rid the land of the remaining forces of The Nameless God in Aurellia and became one of the most powerful titled land owners on the continent.

Fronteria saw a challenging period under the leadership of Dalphaeus Crusade, 'Protector of the land'. The remnants of Sief's army continued to occupy coastal areas with a stubborn stronghold on the southern Island of Dracht. A series of droughts led to starvation and poverty hampering the rebuilding of the land.

Meanwhile Telfon and Gideon headed north with an Orc army to Öchland and established the Church of Vorkath. The legendary military training ground of Borgund was set up and the military arm of Vorkath grew strong. The Orc bred with the Barbarians of the north lands and the legendary Jokulvikra were born.

Teflon set up the Great Inquisition to purge corruption for the land and headed West to Aurelia, while a Crusading army headed South to liberate Fronteria.

It was while the crusading forces were away that an army of mercenaries, funded and led by the High Elf Nobles of Öchland and Fronteria, attempted a military coup to seize assets they had lost during The Nameless Revolt and the following land grab carried out by the disciples of Vorkath. Despite outnumbering the remaining forces 100 to 1, the rogue army was ultimately outmanoeuvred and destroyed by Gideon, but at the cost of the great general's life.

Despite Gideon's demise, the growth of the Vorkathian religion was rapid. A key element to the religion's growth was the expansionist crusades and border wars fought with their neighbours. These were carried out by the now faithful armies of former Öchland, whose numbers had been swelled by Jokulvikra legions

After having assimilated vast lands in Fronteria to the south, and islands to the north of Landfall over the last two centuries, the church of Vorkath became more political in its actions. This shift in emphasis was arguably even more impactful than the fearsome warriors of former Ochland.

The Vorkathian Inquisition made its mark across the continent by targeting and removing enemies of power across the continent of Landfall. To many observers the inquisition is as much an opportunist sect, as a religious one, and it is true that their focus on investigating the rich and powerful tends to lead to land, buildings and assets being seized by the church for its own uses. It must be noted however, that the Inquisition has immense popular support across much of the continent. In Fronteria specifically it is seen by many as liberators from the injustices of previous regimes, which had placed so much power and money in the hands of so few.

Fronteria itself was assimilated by its Aurelian neighbours to the West 125 years ago, when their forces took advantage of political and social turmoil across Fronteria and launched a surprise attack which met little resistance. This union has paved the way to create a single state across the continent - a possibility that was realised when Aurelian emperor Melenkov converted to the Vorkathian faith 30 years ago and in recent months made a pact with leaders in former Ochland and Fronteria to unite the counties under one flag.

The bonds that tie the states remain tenuous however, with most major cities a potential powder keg of political intrigue and a number of individuals and groups disenfranchised and disillusioned by the current state of affairs. At this point in time, observers are in disagreement about whether the new state of Greater Vorkathia will hold through the coming years.

# PRE-VORKATH - THE NAMELESS REVOLT

## (50BV - 0BV)

### AURELIA

Aurelia occupies the eastern portion of Landfall and was the largest and richest nation of the continent; a cosmopolitan country with trade routes stretching across both the continent and the seas.

The dominant religion was Soomian.

The Ziani Dynasty officially ruled from the capital city of Sarlat-Le-Grand. With successive Emperors were generally 'appointed' by the powerful aristocratic nobles and their armies.

Before the Nameless Revolt began Aurelia was military and economically strong. The great Forges, built by Emperor Simion in [45BV], provided each of the noble houses with weapons of power to defend the nation, initially from the threat posed by marauding Rock Troll tribes in the north eastern mountains.

Emperor Simion reigned for 33 years after which he was succeeded by his 16 year old daughter Anastasia..

This change saw an increase in the influence of the noble households, who aimed to extend the period of stability by reaching out to the neighbouring Fronterian houses of power and brokering peace deals. In exchange for an agreed peace, they allowed the free movement to the worshipers of the new religion of the Nameless God which was sweeping through Fronteria after the collapse of its Monarchy.

Territory was lost on its eastern borders to an increasingly militant religion of The Nameless God which had spread from Fronteria and dominated the rest of the continent. After the death of a key military leader Aurelia's military became split across the nation as its provinces fought to remain only free state on the continent, battling forces of both the Nameless God, as well as the Trolls

### FRONTERIA

Fronteria occupies the South Eastern part of the continent and was the cultural heartland of Landfall with the most progressive thinkers of the known world. It was a melting pot of races, philosophies cultures and religions; though Soomian was the most widely practiced.

The official Monarchy allowed city states to govern with autonomy. Elves and High Elves held many prominent positions in government, with their cities in forested West. The northern Mountains had Dwarven strongholds throughout, just south of which is the Capital city is San Crusidor.

The largely self-sufficient southern island of Dracht was the source of the Nameless Revolt. It declared independence after adopting The Nameless God as a state religion, and aggressively tried to spread it's influence, and religion, to the mainland. The ruling Monarch, Elizabeth Ferrer, resigned control of the island and negotiated an uneasy peace.

Elizabeth's reign ended with her unexpected death in 30BV. The monarchy, and the negotiated-peace, ended shortly after that. Her inexperienced son and heir was captured and killed in an ill-advised attempt to reclaim Dracht. The island retaliated and invaders worshipping the Nameless God swept north towards the capital.

After San Crusidor fell to the control of The Nameless ones forces, the evile Duke Xavair van Horn, sacrificed the surviving soldiers to raise a Great Demon and started his campaign to consolidate victory. Though a broken nation, bands of freedom fighters still resisted for many years throughout Fronteria, and in a decisive battle, both the Duke and his Demon were slain and the land fell into anarchy. From this battle, a small band of Freedom fighters (later to become known as the 'Heralds of Vorkath') headed north in search of Sief (the demi-god fire giant who was the Nameless One's champion), determined to hunt her down and banish her from the realm.

## **ÖCHLAND**

The northernmost country of the continent was less developed than the rest, with fewer cities and predominantly human Barbarian tribes roaming from its coasts to the central mountain range. It was strongly allied with its southern neighbour, Fronteria, after years of royal intermarriage. Officially the barbarian tribes paid tithes to the state, though in practice they were generally self sufficient. The primitive north mainly followed an animal druidic religion, while the more cultured south followed Soomian.

The early years of King Zdenk III were plagued by Orc raids originating from across the seas in the east, and from the tunnels in the northern hills, which established an Orc stronghold on the continent.

The Port city Brutzee grew prosperous, frequented by Xoton seafarers.

After the purge of the Royal family to Dractish hands, Zdenk III leads an army to liberate the people, gaining strategic ground. His crusade stalled when aid was withheld by the High Elf Lords, and ultimately came to an end when he met the forces of Sief - the demi-god fire giant who was the Nameless One's champion. Sief swept over Zdenk's armines, destroying them all and conquering all but the most northern outposts of Örchland.

With the country now under The Nameless God's rule, Sief returned to her underground fortress via the southern mountains, leaving her troll armies to inflict high casualties on the remaining population.

## HERALDS OF VORKATH AND THE 'GREAT VICTORY.'

Little is known about the group of freedom fighters before they became known as 'The Heralds of Vorkath'. It is known that they were present at the battle that took Duke Xaviar and his Demon, and that following the battle they headed north to confront Sief in her subterranean fortress.

It is known that two were captured and tortured beyond death and their cries brought the awakening of the new god, Vorkath. The blessed two became the first disciples of Vorkath; Teflon the Everliving, and Gideon the Godslayer.

Five others are known by name, and were present in the final battle of Sief. From Fronteria came Half-Elf Dalphaeus Crusade, leader and follower of XXXX, alongside Illidorn the Mercyless; a High Elf Mage of unknown power. A Druid of the Animal Faith, simply known as Robyn, was one of two touched by the nature gods in the group. The other was Romulus, a peace loving minotaur who's self-sacrifice saw him reborn as nature's disciple and loyal devotee to Robyn. The last named was Ith XII, the troglodyte slave of Gideon.

The details of 'Sief's Last Stand' lost in history but it is known that she was ultimately pursued to the the top of a tower of her underground fortress, where she was thrown into a chasm to her death by Roumulus.

The lands rejoiced as the 'Great Victory' was announced, and the remaining armies of Sief faded from the earth, retreating to their underground homes, while those that remained were hunted and persecuted.

## OF THE HERALDS OF VORKATH

Dalphaeus returned to a rapturous reception in Fronteria where he is proclaimed Lord Protector of the realm.

Romulus heads back to his island home of fellow minotaurs

Illidorn initially continues his adventures into the mystic arts and sets sea for undiscovered lands following grandiose claims that he is setting out to rule the world.

Little is known about the movements of Robyn, though it is known that she did emerge from the underground fortress alive.

Teflon and Gideon move to secure Öchland as the first Vorkathian state of the known world - along with the troglodyte slave, Ith XII.

# THE ERA OF VORKATH (0EV - 300EV)

## AURELIA

After the fall of Sief and the appearance of Vorkath, Aurelia's remaining armed forces were split across the land. Illidorn, one of the heroes of the Great

Victory led a campaign to rid the land of the remaining forces of the Nameless God, earning a significant landed title as a reward.

The following period of peace saw prosperity and stability return to Aurelia, allowing it to become the trading and cultural centre of the known world.

The new religion Vorkath spread throughout the land. High Inquisitor Teflon brought the Inquisition to the country, seeking out corrupt nobles and further increasing the religion's influence.

The death of Empress Anastasia saw a brief shift and struggle for power between her heirs, with the new Emperor Laurent emerging victorious after seizing the Capital by force and executing his rivals, Victor and Hubert. The Vorkathian church however claim Victor as a martyr to their cause.

Meanwhile, Lord Illidorn the Duke of Routession, had become the largest and most wealthy landowner on the continent and controlled a considerable personal army. His lands welcomed the mass immigration and settlement of Elven-kind who were fleeing persecution in other lands.

Emperor Memphis succeeded Laurent's peaceful reign. Memphis was a high-elf with dreams of expansion of his empire. His 'New Lands Deal' saw Aurelian influence extend over Eastern borders with Fronteria, securing another period of stability. New allies and trade partners were found in the West as the influence of the extensive Navy extended.

One expedition of note was the 'Lost Armada'; a privately funded expedition led by Duke Illidorn. This expedition of predominantly High elves set out to conquer the continent of Pape'etc, but neither Illidorn nor any of his ships were seen again.

Ultimately though Emperor Memphis's dreams of expansion were plagued by failure, and he became erratic, paranoid. Convinced of treachery, he employed the Inquisition to seek out the reasons for his military failures, which led to the execution of his entire senior staff. Inquisitor Saven Dias was rewarded with the seat of Routessan, left vacant after the disappearance of Illidorn, increasing the influence of the Vorkathian religion in the region, which was still saw the majority of the population following the Soomian religion.

After Emperor Memphis's death, a contested powers struggle ensues. Memphis's son Baylor (a pious and devout Soomian) succeeds his father with the backing of many nobles and the military might of Dais. Dias promptly declares Vorkath as the state religion in Routession and creates the 'Army of the Faithful, appointing Borgund-trained Vorkathin generals throughout his army, which is the largest military force in Aurilia.

A surge of anti-elven sentiment sees destruction of many elvedn strongholds, and ultimately leads to a mass exodus of elves from the land.

After a religious epiphany, Emperor Baylor retires to solitude for 11 years to meditate. In his absence, first chancellor Norfalls Vieken appoints generals of

Vorkathian faith to positions of power, though the religion still remains less popular than Soomian thought the population.

Upon his return, Baylor began to reverse the appointment of non-soomian lords, but was soon assassinated, leaving no heir.

The privy council appoints a distant relation Arkmady Malenkov as heir, amongst controversy at his common ancestry. When Malenkov openly converts to Vorkath, he formally declares it as the state religion, and in doing so incorporates all the druidic fatih aspects into Vorkath.

## FRONTERIA

Dalphaeus Crusade, hero of the Great Victory, was voted protector of the realm upon his return, and oversaw the rebuilding of the country. The remnants of the royal bloodline were appointed landed titles and positions of power throughout the land.

The rebuilding was hampered by raids from Dracht which resulted in many of the western coastal towns and villages occupied by forces of the Nameless God. Meanwhile in the north, General Galamas led invading forces from Öchland, capturing San Crusidor and the surrounding areas. Crusade's attempts to negotiate with the occupying General failed and as a symbol of defiance, Galamas ordered Vorkathian priests and mages to surround the city by a mountainous ravine, making it all but impregnable to attack.

The border struggles led to decades of uncertainty, with the island of Dracht remaining a thorn in the side of the mainland. A series of droughts left the mainland barren, and thousands died of starvation in poverty.

With threats on northern and southern borders, Crusade looked West for help, and signed the New Land Deal with Emperor Memphis, exchanging military aid for land and titles. This deal was not popular with local nobles, who openly defied Dalphaeus Crusade (withholding funds and troops and obstruction supply lines). The New Land Deal would cause problems politically for future generations.

Crusade disappeared during a diplomatic mission to Northern Fronteria, leaving his son Roberto Crusade as Lord protector. Roberto began a bloody 40 year crusade to reclaim the Isle of Dracht. The campaign, backed by Aurelian forces was victorious but at the cost of over 250,000 lives. Martial law was imposed on the island to quell any potential uprisings.

In the absence of leadership, corruption and infighting spread throughout the noble classes. The common folk, starving and neglected, welcomed the religion of Vorkath, and with it the Inquisition, so Crusade returned from Dracht he found the majority of his allies purged from positions of power and at the mercy of Vorkathian Justice.

The Nation was split in loyalty, with some noble families blaming Roberto for their losses following his father's New Land Deal. He was arrested for espionage

and colluding with a foreign power in a political coup, stripped of his titles and sent to work the mines. He escaped on transit to the mines (some say he was rescued) and absconded to Aurelia.

Months Later Aurelian forces invaded Fronteria. There was little resistance, with no organised military and many Fronteria Nobles descending from Aurelian lines assisted the invading army. Most of the nation was taken over and ruled from the Aurelian capital Ixelpau.

The northern regions still remained under the control of the occupying Vorkathian forces, and their religious influence spread (thanks greatly to an increase in influx of influential lords from Vorkathia (as Öchland was now known) to become second only to Soomian. The religion's hold on the country was increased by the new Lord Protector, Cisco Madrigan, who strengthened political ties with Vorkathia, and allowed the building of new churches after converting to the religion himself.

Madrigan worked with the Inquisition to remove any remaining Nobles from the pre-Aurelian era, and spread the word of Vorkath by opening centres of learning throughout Fronteria. A period of peace and prosperity followed under Aurelian rule. When their ruling neighbour converted to Vorkathian faith in 275, all former lands of Fronteria did likewise.

## **ÖCHLAND**

After the coming of Vorkath, his First Disciples headed to Öchland and established a heartland for the religion.

Gideon's Orc army, marched north and took the coastal capital Kirchheim by force and placed one of Gideon's army generals as Governor of the realm. It was here that Teflon set up the Inquisition and appointed himself as High Inquisitor vowing to purge the lands of the impure.

The Inquisition initially targeted the noble powerhouses of Örchland, and several fell with assets being seized by the church. Those who were not captured fled the lands. Once the Inquisition was established, High Inquisitor Teflon headed west to spread the word of Vorkath to Aurelia.

A resistance coup, led by wealthy High Elf landowners, attempted to appoint Jane Rovoire (of a Frontarian bloodline) as Queen, to undermine the Inquisition's control. The plot was uncovered and assets and lands of the guilty were incorporated into the church.

Öchland was now a Vorkathian stronghold. This position of power was further increased with a decree that lands and titles were no longer automatically passed from parent to child, but instead would be rewarded to disciples of Vorkath for their purity of efforts.

The military training ground of Borgund was established under the command of the Orc General Galamus, who swelled the military arm of Vorkath, attracting Orc from around the world, who freely intermingled and bred with the Barbarian tribes of the north, creating a new race known as the Jokulvikra.

The new military might of the Church was called upon in a Crusade to free Fronteria. General Galamus led the army who marched south and conquered the City of San Crusidor.

With General Galamus, and a large portion of the army away, the remaining High Elves of Öchland made a final play for their former assets. An army of mercenaries, led by a powerful mage swept through the south to finally lay siege to Gideon at the mountain fortress Borgund.

Gideon's forces were cut off and outnumbered one hundred to one, and in his final battle, he lured the attacking army into castle grounds. The stronghold and parts of the mountain itself collapsed taking both armies, and Gideon himself, with it. The fist shape remains of the fort became known as the Hand of Gideon, around which Borgund was reborn.

For their treachery, the inquisition named High Elves as enemies of the state. All Elven lands were seized by the church, as the race was pursued throughout the country. Borders were blocked and controlled by Inquisitors watching for those trying to flee, or to bring in aid in.

During a brief period of growth and stability, positions of power were increasingly taken up by orc and Jokulvikra Vorkathians. This was followed by a period known as the Period of Purgery which saw a rise in tribal infighting within its borders, and a series of failed military campaigns against a better organised Aurelian army in the south. The church blamed a lack of faith amongst the populace, and called the Crusade of Truth to conquer in lands the north and unify the tribes. Before departing, the leader of the Crusade, Justice Black, decreed that the nation (including the lands conquered from Fronteria) would be renamed Vorkatia.

The first centre of Vorkathian learning was set up by High Priest Ancus Marcius upon his election as Governor. Here, students would undertake studies dedicated to their chosen aspect of Vorkath. His reflections on the Period of Purgery revealed to him that a new order of divine military strategists was needed, and the Order of Gideon was born.

Marcus retired after a period of stability and educational reform, his successor, High Inquisitor Bazaz Aurillac began a period of expansion. Political, religions and military envoys were sent across the continent. Forces went south to the largely barren mountain regions of once northern Fronteria, and a 10 year campaign overseas to the north saw the conquest of the Gnomish islands of Vaihalarama.

After the conversion of the Aurilian Emperor to Vorkath, exchange of trade and ideas and importantly envoys increased between the nations. Within decades, Emperor Melenkov announced the vision of a united continent and signed a treaty to unite under one land known as Greater Vorkathia.

